GRAPHIC INDIA
ISSUE
#13
RAMAYAN
3392 AD
DASGUPTA/KANG
MARZ/SEARS

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

RAMAYAN 3392 AD

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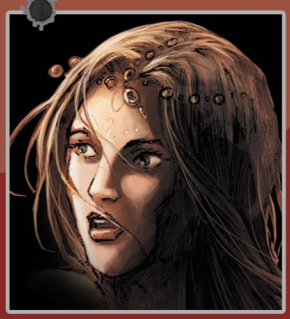
PREVIOUSLY...

Thousands of years in the future, an epic unfolds. From his stronghold on the continent of Nark, the evil **Ravan** means to crush the world under his heel. But the free-willed races of the lands of Aryavarta, led by the humans of the city of Armagarh, resist the dark lord. However, treachery resulted in the exile of **Rama**, who is Armagarh's greatest warrior. Along with his younger brother **Lakshman**, and beautiful **Seeta**, daughter of earth, Rama travels the land in a quest to restore the earth to its former glory.

Prisoners in the dungeons of the city of Panchvati, Rama and Lakshman were forced to fight in the gladiatorial battles of Dwand-Yuddh. Meanwhile, Seeta escaped from the clutches of **Dusha**n and was reunited with her friend **Vishwamitr**a, who urged her to unleash her earth magic and destroy Panchvati, and thus escape the wretched city. Rama and Lakshman defeated their initial opponents in the arena, but prepared to confront their final opponent, **Viv-Sha**. The general-turned-gladiator has a score to settle with Rama, and the greatest battle in the history of Dwand-Yuddh is about to begin.



MY ARM IS BROKEN, MY SHOULDER DISLOCATED.
I AM UNABLE TO *LIFT* A WEAPON.
I CAN ONLY WATCH HELPLESSLY...
...AS MY BROTHER RAMA FACES THE *ASURA GENERAL* WHO DEFEATED US IN JANASTHAN THREE YEARS AGO.
THIS TIME, THE BATTLE IS A *DEATH MATCH*.
KHARA, THIS IS *NOT* A FAIR FIGHT. *ONE* OF MY COMBATANTS IS INCAPACITATED, AND THE *OTHER* JUST SURVIVED A BATTLE WITH THE KAA-BANDHA!
YOU *CANNOT* JUST PIT HIM AGAINST THE GENERAL!
DON'T TELL *ME*...
...TELL THE *AUDIENCE*.
LISTEN TO THEM, DEAR SISTER. THEY *LOVE* IT.
THE GENERAL
CURSE HIM!

I REMEMBER A GENERAL OF A VAST ARMY, A *NOBLE* MAN WHO KNEW THE VALUE OF WORDS GIVEN.

HOW DID THIS *HAPPEN* TO YOU, VIV-SHAN?

YES, I VALUED MY WORDS. AND I PAID THE *PRICE* FOR THAT.

WHEN RAVAN FOUND THAT I LET YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE *LIVE*, HE STRIPPED ME OF MY RANK AND THREW ME IN THE PITS OF ROAR-RAV. FOR A *YEAR* I ENDURED THE NIGHTMARE OF THE PITS, WORKING AS A SLAVE.

BUT I *ESCAPED* FROM NARK.

I WANDERED ALL ACROSS ARYAVARTA LOOKING FOR SHELTER, BUT BEING AN ASURA, I WAS NOT WELCOME IN *ANY* COUNTRY.

FINALLY I REACHED *PANCHVATI*. KHARA TOOK ME IN.

AS A *SLAVE*. FROM THE SLAVE OF *RAVAN* TO THE SLAVE OF *KHARA*.

NOT EXACTLY A *PROMOTION*.

I AM OF THE PRIMUS RAKSHASA CLAN OF LANKA, AN *ASURA WARBORN*!

I VALUE MY *COMMITMENT*, BE IT TO RAVAN OR TO KHARA, OR EVEN TO YOU!

WE NEED NOT *DO* THIS, VIV-SHAN. WE CAN TAKE DOWN KHARA TOGETHER.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO YOU?

KRANNG

THE RULES SAY '*TO THE DEATH*'!

AS A SLAVE. FROM THE SLAVE OF RAVAN TO THE SLAVE OF KHARA.
NOT EXACTLY A PROMOTION.
I AM OF THE PRIMUS RAKSHASA CLAN OF LANKA, AN ASURA WARBORN!
I VALUE MY COMMITMENT, BE IT TO RAVAN OR TO KHARA, OR EVEN TO YOU!
WE NEED NOT DO THIS, VIV-SHAN. WE CAN TAKE DOWN KHARA TOGETHER.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO YOU?
THE RULES SAY 'TO THE DEATH'!
ANNG

CHANNG
WRAMM

WE SHALL SING OF THIS DAY TO OUR HATCHLINGS!
RAMA!
WE ARE HERE TO WATCH THE SPECTACLE OF RAMA'S DEATH. EVEN IF HE WINS, AND THERE IS VERY LITTLE CHANCE OF THAT, HE WILL STILL BE KILLED.
BY MOTHER DHARTI!
DO YOU SEE THE WRETCHES SURROUNDING US, SEETA? THEY CRAVE BLOOD.
DID YOU THINK THEY HAD MADE RAMA THEIR HERO? THEY ARE EAGER TO SEE HIM FALL.
THIS IS A WRETCHED CITY WHERE MEN FIGHT FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF THE MOB, A CITY INFESTED WITH CORRUPTION AND DECADENCE, RULED BY THE MONSTROUS KHARA, DUSHAN AND SOORNAKA.
THIS CITY IS DOOMED, JUST LIKE YOUR FRIENDS ARE, SEETA.
BRING AN END TO ITS MISERY.
CLEANSE THIS CITY.
WHAT DO YOU ASK OF ME, VISH? WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO? I... CAN'T...

THIS IS POINTLESS. WE CAN DO THIS ALL DAY, VIV-SHAN.
UNTIL ONE OF US FINALLY GIVES UP.
GHNN!
SHRIK
OR GETS KILLED!
HUKK!
IT SEEMS I OVERESTIMATED YOU.
WHUDD
KLANGG
REMEMBER THIS SWORD, RAMA? THIS WAS YOUR PARTING GIFT.
A PITY YOU SHALL DIE BY YOUR OWN WEAPON.
NO!

KHARA, WE NEED TO TALK.
LATER.
WHERE WERE YOU YESTERDAY, DUSHAN? YOUR WAR-GHOULS LOST MISERABLY AGAINST THE SUPER WARRIORS.
AH, IT SEEMS YOUR NEW CATCH DIDN'T TREAT YOU TOO WELL, BROTHER.
HEH HEH.
SHUT UP! I'LL SPLIT THAT WENCH OPEN WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON HER AGAIN!
LISTEN, CALL OFF THE SUPER WARRIORS, I NEED THEM ALIVE. I WILL USE THEM AS BAIT TO LURE BACK THAT WITCH.
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND. THIS FIGHT IS MAKING ME MORE MONEY THAN I COULD MAKE IN A LIFETIME.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, I NEED THEM NOW!
I HAVE NO TIME FOR YOUR SILLY GAMES, DUSHAN. WATCH THE DUEL OR LEAVE.
I DEMAND!
I DECLINE.

YOU HAVE GOT A LOT OF NERVE, BOY.
GKK...
YAAAHH!
KWOOM

BWOOM
WHAT IN THE NAME OF...?
HMM?
IN THE NAME OF EVERYTHING THAT'S GOOD IN THIS WORLD...
KRAK
...STOP THIS INSANITY!

THUDD
IT'S NOT OVER YET.
WHUDD
NO.
KRAKT
IT IS OVER.
I... SURRENDER.
RAMA!
RAMA!
RAMA!
RAMA!
RAMA!

AN IMPRESSIVE VICTORY!
NOW DECLARE YOURSELF CHAMPION BY SLAYING THE GENERAL!
NO.
I AM A SUPER WARRIOR, AND MY HONOR TELLS ME OTHERWISE. I SHALL NOT KILL AN UNARMED MAN.
IF YOU DON'T KILL HIM, THEN ALL THE BETS ARE OFF.
WHAT THE HELL, BROTHER? ARE YOU PROVOKING THE MOB?
I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA. WHY DON'T YOU TWO GET YOUR BUTTS DOWN HERE AND PROVE YOUR METTLE?
YESSS, LET THEM FIGHT! THE NERVE, WANTING TO CALL OFF THE BETS!
KHARA AND DUSHAN WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE ARENA OF DESPAIR!
DO IT, YOU COWARDS!

IDIOTS, YOU COULD HAVE BEEN MY CHAMPIONS, AND YOU DARE CHALLENGE ME?
YOU AND YOUR WOMAN WILL PAY FOR WHAT SHE'S DONE TO ME.
YES, COME FORTH YOU CHEATING, LYING SCUM!
THIS IS NOT A FAIR DUEL, THIS IS MURDER. AND I WILL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO STOP YOU.
YOU NEED NOT DO THIS, SOORNAKA. YOU'RE PUTTING YOURSELF IN GRAVE DANGER, IT ISN'T WORTH...
SHUT UP.
THIS IS WORTH EVERYTHING.
BRAAP
BRAAP
BRAAP

DO YOU WANT THIS TO *CONTINUE*?
DO YOU WANT YOUR FRIENDS TO BE *SLAUGHTERED*?
NOTHING CAN SAVE THIS CITY ANYMORE, SEETA. IT'S SUBMERGED IN MADNESS AND CHAOS. YOUR *FRIENDS* WILL DROWN IN IT AS WELL.
GIVE THIS CITY *SALVATION!*
YES...

WHAT HAVE I DONE?
IT IS *FINISHED*, SEETA. WE NOW TAKE OUR LEAVE.
UHNN?
HUH?
YOU HAVE SERVED YOUR PURPOSE IN THIS LAND. THE STORY OF PANCHVATI ENDS *HERE*.
YOU HAVE BROUGHT AN *END* TO ITS ANNOYING PRESENCE.
THIS CITY WAS BUILT ON THE TARNISHED GROUND WHERE I WAS *CONCEIVED*, BLASPHEMOUSLY BROUGHT INTO THIS WORLD BY THE EVIL OF MAN.
YOU *CLEANSED* IT.

AFTER YOU FLED MITHILA, I KILLED VISH AND CONSUMED HIS CONSCIOUSNESS AND FORM. HE DOESN'T EVEN EXIST ANYMORE.
I NOW CLAIM YOU, SEETA, AS MY OWN.
TOGETHER WE SHALL RESHAPE THE WORLD TO OUR WILL. WE SHALL BECOME GODS!
AND YOU SHALL BECOME THE BRIDE OF RAVAN!

UNGH!
SEETA!
BLAROOM

GAAAH!
SHRAZZAK
IMPOSSIBLE! NOTHING CAN HURT ME!
I AM INVULNERABLE!
YOU'RE WRONG!
AM I? WE'LL HAVE TO FIND OUT ANOTHER DAY.
FAREWELL, RAMA.

BOOOOM
NO...
...NO...
HE'S GONE.
ALL THIS TIME, WE THOUGHT HE WAS VISH.
SHE HAS BEEN TAKEN BY THE ASURA PRIME HIMSELF. THERE IS NO HOPE.
MY LIFE AND MY HONOR BELONG TO YOU, RAMA. BUT WE ALONE CAN'T STAND UP AGAINST THE WHOLE CONTINENT OF NARK.
LET'S GO.
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR US HERE ANYMORE.

A FEW DAYS LATER
LAKSH, DO YOU SEE ANYTHING IN THE DISTANCE?
JUST A DUST STORM.
OH...THAT'S ANGAD AND HIS TROOPS. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE, THOSE MONKEYS MEAN NOTHING BUT TROUBLE.
NO.
LIGHT A SIGNAL. WE SHALL JOIN THE KISHKINDHANS IN THEIR CIVIL WAR.
SHOULDN'T WE BE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO RESCUE SEETA INSTEAD?
WE SHALL...BUT NOT ALONE.
I WILL TEAR DOWN THE EMPIRE OF RAVAN BRICK BY BRICK...
"...AND FOR THAT I WILL BUILD THE GREATEST ARMY THIS WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN."
TO BE CONTINUED.

LAKSHMAN
Story - Ron Marz
Art - Bart Sears
Color - R. Gavaskar
Letters - B.S.Ravi Kiran
Thanks to Shamik Dasgupta
ALL OF WHICH BRINGS US, I GUESS, TO ME.
EVEN NOW, AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED, AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH, IT IS HARD TO DESCRIBE MY PLACE IN THIS.
I AM NOT MY BROTHER. I AM NOT THE WARRIOR THAT RAMA IS. I AM NOT THE HERO HE IS.
AND I NEVER WILL BE.

MY EARLIEST MEMORIES ARE OF RAMA.
ALWAYS RAMA.
HE WAS OLDER, WISER. WHEN I WAS A BOY, HE WAS MY MODEL FOR ALL THINGS.
WE WERE KSHATRIYAS OF ARMAGARH. THERE WAS A STANDARD TO WHICH WE ASPIRED.
RAMA WAS MY STANDARD.
BUT I ALWAYS FELL A LITTLE SHORT.
WHERE HE WAS SERENE, I COULD BE QUICK TO ANGER.
WHERE HE WAS JUDICIOUS, I COULD BE IMPULSIVE.
BUT NOW, AS THEN, I DO MY BEST.

NOW, AS THEN, I UNDERSTAND MY DUTY.
MY FIRST LOYALTY IS TO RAMA, AND I WILL STAY AT MY BROTHER'S SIDE, ALWAYS. WHERE RAMA IS, THERE SHALL *LAKSHMAN* BE AS WELL.
I WOULD GLADLY LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR HIM...THOUGH LET'S HOPE IT DOES NOT COME TO *THAT* JUST YET.
BECAUSE OUR STORY IS NOT YET FINISHED.
END.

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Recently, Ravan abducted Seeta, stealing her away from Rama, who vowed to rescue his beloved. But Rama knows he cannot rescue Seeta with only Lakshman and **Viv-Shan** as allies. Thus the three comrades joined the rebel army of Kishkindha, under the leadership of **Shugreave**. However, Rama has a motive beyond overthrowing the mad **King Baali**. Rama intends to build the greatest army Aryavarta has ever known, in order to challenge the might of Ravan.

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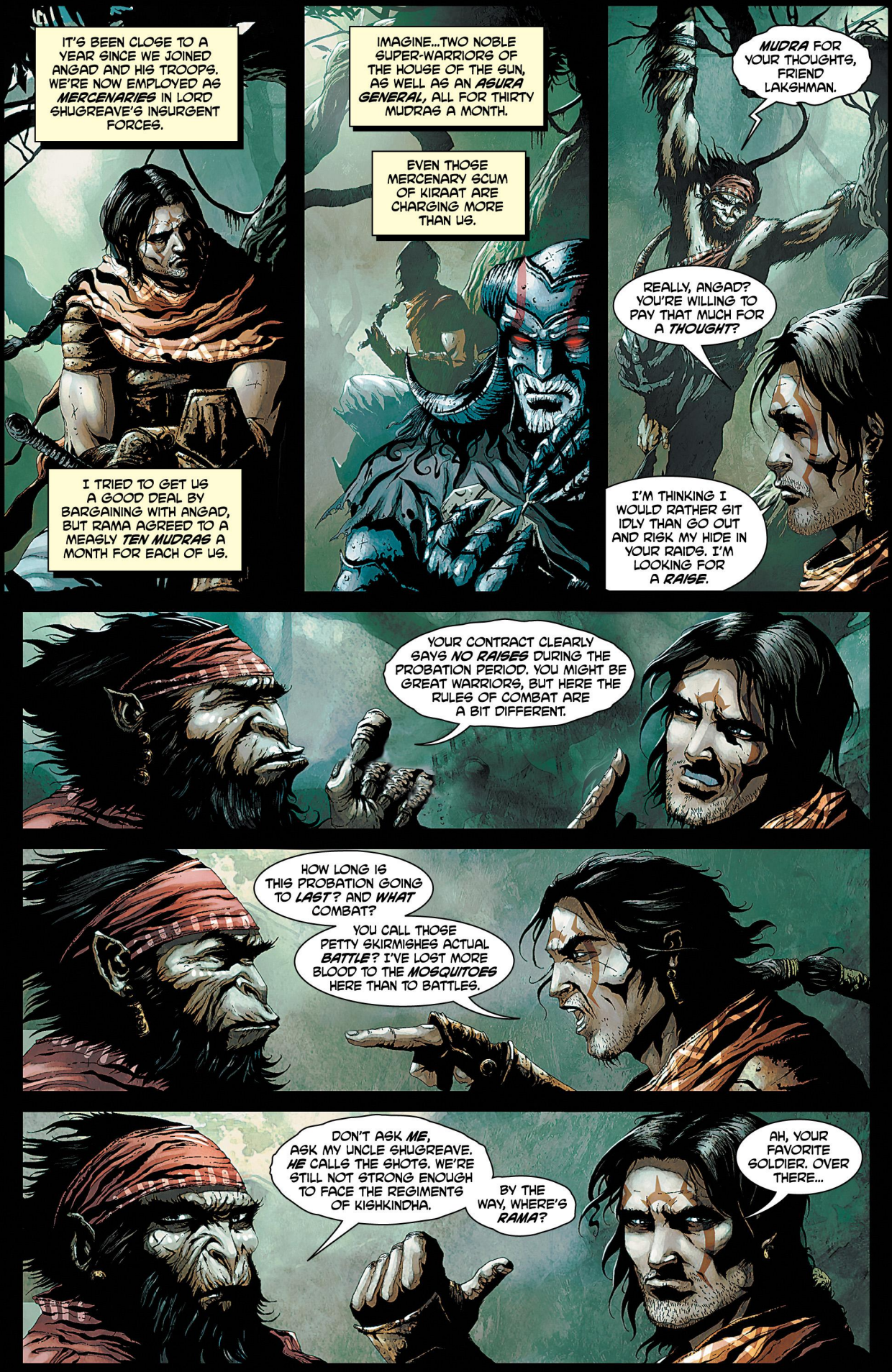
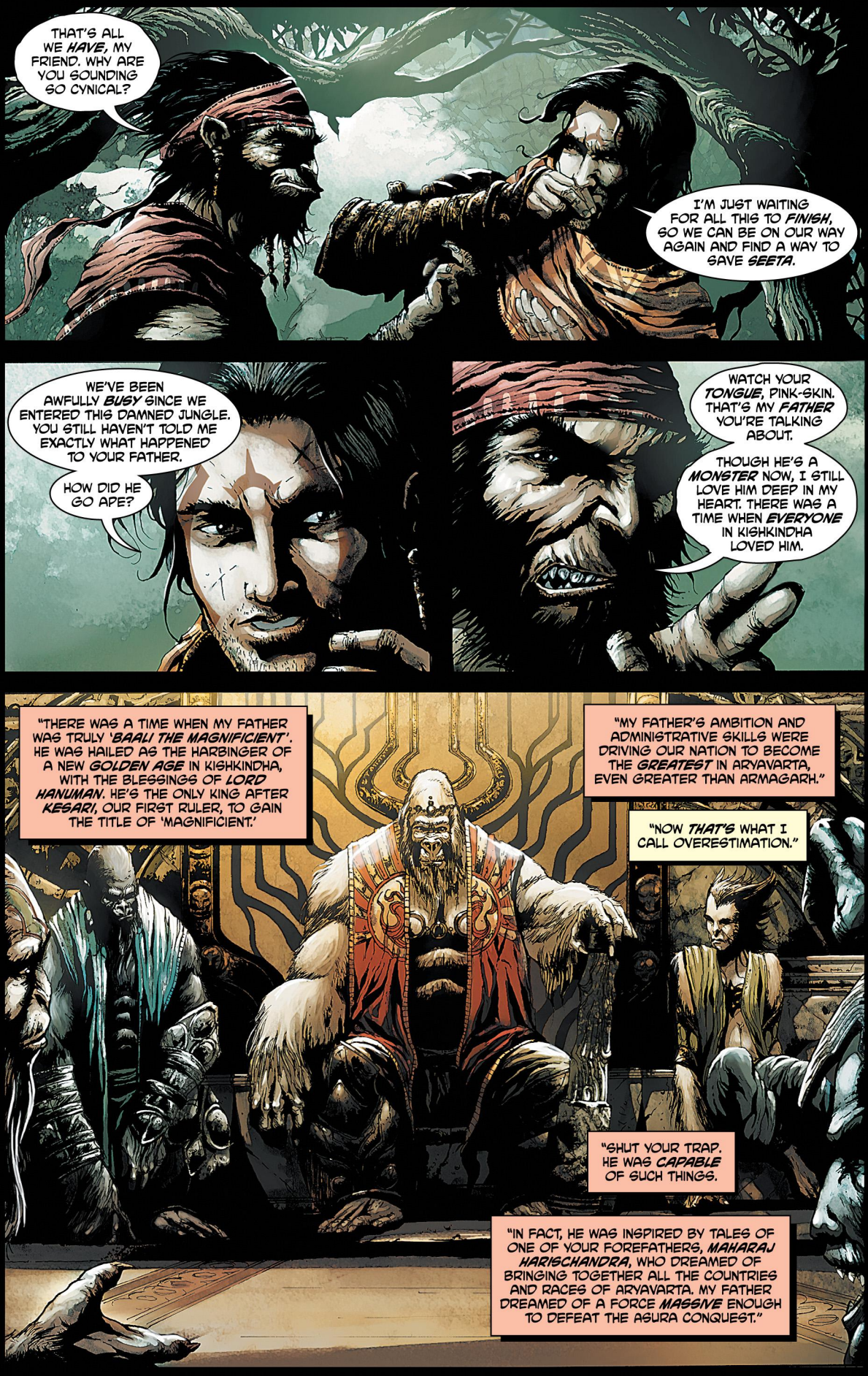
THE GREAT RAINFOREST BENEATH THE RANGE OF MOUNT RISYAMUK.
CLOSE TO THE EQUATORIAL REGION, THE RAINFOREST IS MILLIONS OF YOJANS ACROSS.
THE MOST SPECIES-RICH BIOME OF THE ENTIRE CONTINENT OF ARYAVARTA.
HOME TO MORE THAN FIVE MILLION SPECIES OF PLANTS, INSECTS, BIRDS, FISH, MAMMALS AND REPTILES FOR MORE THAN A MILLENNIUM.
AND NOW HOME TO THE *REBELS* OF KISHKINDHA.


IT'S BEEN CLOSE TO A YEAR SINCE WE JOINED ANGAD AND HIS TROOPS. WE'RE NOW EMPLOYED AS *MERCENARIES* IN LORD SHUGREAVE'S INSURGENT FORCES.
I TRIED TO GET US A GOOD DEAL BY BARGAINING WITH ANGAD, BUT RAMA AGREED TO A MEASLY *TEN MUDRAS* A MONTH FOR EACH OF US.
IMAGINE...TWO NOBLE SUPER-WARRIORS OF THE HOUSE OF THE SUN, AS WELL AS AN *ASURA GENERAL*, ALL FOR THIRTY MUDRAS A MONTH.
EVEN THOSE MERCENARY SCUM OF KIRAAT ARE CHARGING MORE THAN US.
MUDRA FOR YOUR THOUGHTS, FRIEND LAKSHMAN.
REALLY, ANGAD? YOU'RE WILLING TO PAY THAT MUCH FOR A *THOUGHT*?
I'M THINKING I WOULD RATHER SIT IDLY THAN GO OUT AND RISK MY HIDE IN YOUR RAIDS. I'M LOOKING FOR A *RAISE*.
YOUR CONTRACT CLEARLY SAYS *NO RAISES* DURING THE PROBATION PERIOD. YOU MIGHT BE GREAT WARRIORS, BUT HERE THE RULES OF COMBAT ARE A BIT DIFFERENT.
HOW LONG IS THIS PROBATION GOING TO *LAST*? AND *WHAT* COMBAT?
YOU CALL THOSE PETTY SKIRMISHES ACTUAL *BATTLE*? I'VE LOST MORE BLOOD TO THE *MOSQUITOES* HERE THAN TO BATTLES.
DON'T ASK *ME*, ASK MY UNCLE SHUGREAVE. *HE* CALLS THE SHOTS. WE'RE STILL NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO FACE THE REGIMENTS OF KISHKINDHA.
BY THE WAY, WHERE'S *RAMA*?
AH, YOUR FAVORITE SOLDIER. OVER THERE...

"...STANDING LIKE A STONE SENTINEL, MUTE AND STOIC.
"I CAN COUNT THE WORDS HE'S SPOKEN IN THE PAST YEAR ON BOTH HANDS.
"YOU MUST BE HAPPY, ANGAD. YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A MUTE FIGHTING MACHINE WHO NEVER ASKS FOR ANYTHING. IF NOT FOR ME, YOU'D HAVE CHEATED HIM OUT OF HIS DUES, HOWEVER MEAGER THEY MIGHT BE.
"HE HAS BEEN SO *SILENT* AFTER PANCHVATI, SOMETIMES HE *SCARES* ME."
"YOUR BROTHER IS AN INVALUABLE ADDITION IN OUR RANKS, LAKSHMAN. I'VE NEVER SEEN A MAN SO DRIVEN IN THE PURSUIT OF THE INTERESTS OF ANOTHER NATION AND RACE. WITH RAMA ON OUR SIDE, WE'LL SURELY BRING DOWN MY FATHER BAALI...SOMEDAY."
"LIKELY TRUE, BUT I'M AFRAID RAMA IS DRIVING HIMSELF TOO HARD."

"AFTER *RAVAN* FOOLED US INTO BELIEVING HE WAS VISHWAMITRA, HE ABDUCTED SEETA IN PANCHVATI. HE FORCED HER TO UNLEASH HER POWER AND DESTROY THE CITY. *THOUSANDS* DIED, AND RAVAN GOT WHAT HE COVETED. HEAVEN KNOWS WHAT HE'S PLANNING TO DO WITH HER NOW.
"RAMA FAILED TO *STOP* RAVAN, AND HE'S TAKEN THE BLAME UPON HIMSELF. IT WAS *HIS* IDEA TO JOIN YOUR RANKS. IT SEEMS HE DOESN'T EVEN *CARE* ANYMORE.
"AS YOU'VE SEEN, HE'S BECOME DESPERATE, EVEN *SUICIDAL*, TAKING GRAVE RISKS TO FIGHT THE IMPERIAL ARMY OF KISHKINDHA."
"WE KNOW. RAMA ALONE HAS KILLED MORE SOLDIERS THAN A *PLATOON* OF REBELS. THE LEGEND OF THE BLUE WARRIOR FROM ARMAGARH HAS SPREAD IN KISHKINDHA, AND OUR CAUSE'S SYMPATHIZERS *CHEER* FOR HIM.
"BESIDES BEING A GREAT WARRIOR, HE HAS ADDED TO OUR PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. PEOPLE HAVE *HOPE* NOW."
"YES...HOPE..."


THAT'S ALL WE *HAVE*, MY FRIEND. WHY ARE YOU SOUNDING SO CYNICAL?
I'M JUST WAITING FOR ALL THIS TO *FINISH*, SO WE CAN BE ON OUR WAY AGAIN AND FIND A WAY TO SAVE *SEETA*.
WE'VE BEEN AWFULLY *BUSY* SINCE WE ENTERED THIS DAMNED JUNGLE. YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FATHER.
HOW DID HE GO APE?
WATCH YOUR *TONGUE*, PINK-SKIN. THAT'S MY *FATHER* YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
THOUGH HE'S A *MONSTER* NOW, I STILL LOVE HIM DEEP IN MY HEART. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN *EVERYONE* IN KISHKINDHA LOVED HIM.
"THERE WAS A TIME WHEN MY FATHER WAS TRULY '*BAALI THE MAGNIFICIENT*'. HE WAS HAILED AS THE HARBINGER OF A NEW *GOLDEN AGE* IN KISHKINDHA, WITH THE BLESSINGS OF *LORD HANUMAN*. HE'S THE ONLY KING AFTER *KESARI*, OUR FIRST RULER, TO GAIN THE TITLE OF 'MAGNIFICIENT.'
"MY FATHER'S AMBITION AND ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS WERE DRIVING OUR NATION TO BECOME THE *GREATEST* IN ARYAVARTA, EVEN GREATER THAN ARMAGARH."
"NOW *THAT'S* WHAT I CALL OVERESTIMATION."
"SHUT YOUR TRAP. HE WAS *CAPABLE* OF SUCH THINGS.
"IN FACT, HE WAS INSPIRED BY TALES OF ONE OF YOUR FOREFATHERS, *MAHARAJ HARISCHANDRA*, WHO DREAMED OF BRINGING TOGETHER ALL THE COUNTRIES AND RACES OF ARYAVARTA. MY FATHER DREAMED OF A FORCE *MASSIVE* ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THE ASURA CONQUEST."

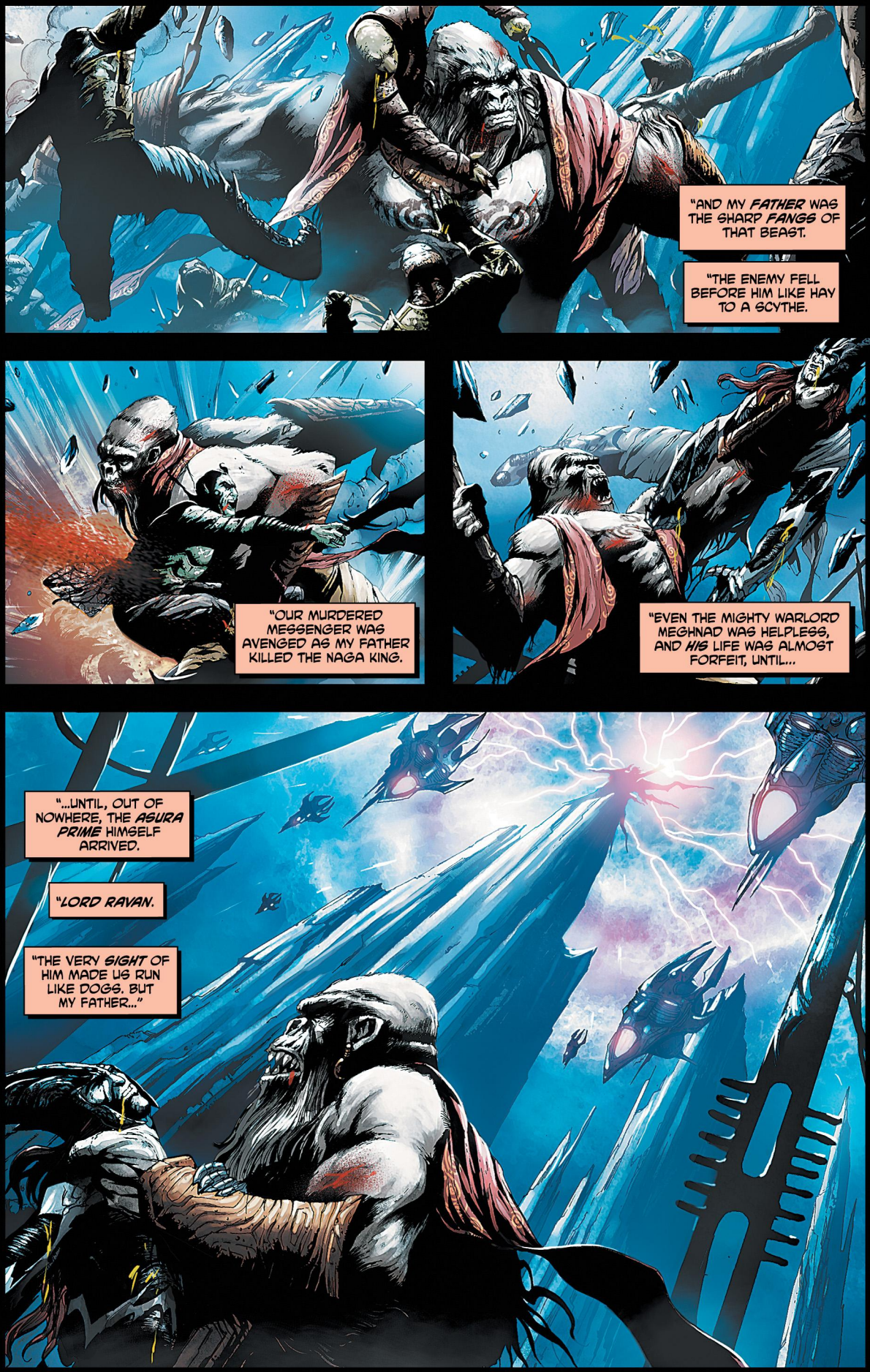
"MESSENGERS WERE SENT TO ALL NATIONS. THE *BHALUS* WERE THE MOST COMPLIANT, AS *KING JAMBWAN* HATES ASURAS. OUR KINGDOMS HAVE A LONG HISTORY OF ALLIANCE.
"THE *GARUDAS* WERE EQUALLY KEEN TO JOIN OUR PURPOSE.
"THE *BRISHAV* KING WAS *HONOR BOUND* TO US BECAUSE WE HAD SAVED HIS PEOPLE FROM THE ASURAS. IT WAS TAKEN FOR GRANTED THAT THEY WOULD JOIN, THOUGH I HEARD HE WAS NONE TOO HAPPY ABOUT IT.
"YOU KNOW THE STORY OF ARMAGARH. *MAHARAJ DASHRATH* WAS EAGER TO JOIN FORCES, BUT YOUR *COUNCIL* THOUGHT OTHERWISE. AND SO WE LOST OUR MOST IMPORTANT ALLY.
"I DON'T KNOW WHY FATHER EVEN *BOTHERED* TO SEND THE ALLIANCE PROPOSAL TO THE TREACHEROUS *NAGAS* AND THEIR KING. THEY WERE ALREADY IN BED WITH *MEGHNAD*, SON OF RAVAN.
"ALL WE ACHIEVED WAS THE DEATH OF A GOOD MESSENGER."

"BUT MY FATHER'S WILL WOULD NOT BE DETERRED. HE GATHERED HIS ALLIES, AND DECIDED TO SET AN *EXAMPLE* FOR ALL ARYAVARTA BY RIDDING OUR CONTINENT OF ASURA INFLUENCE.
"IT WAS A LONG AND PERILOUS JOURNEY TO THE NORTH. *HALF* OUR SOLDIERS DID NOT SURVIVE THE COLD OF THE TUNDRA.
"BUT MY FATHER'S LEADERSHIP INSTILLED COURAGE AND HOPE.
"I WAS STILL A *YOUTH* WHEN WE FACED OUR ENEMIES. THE SIGHT OF THEIR VAST RANKS MADE MY TAIL LIMP WITH FEAR.
"BUT MY FATHER...
"...*HE* WAS FEARLESS...
"...HE WAS *MAGNIFICENT.*"

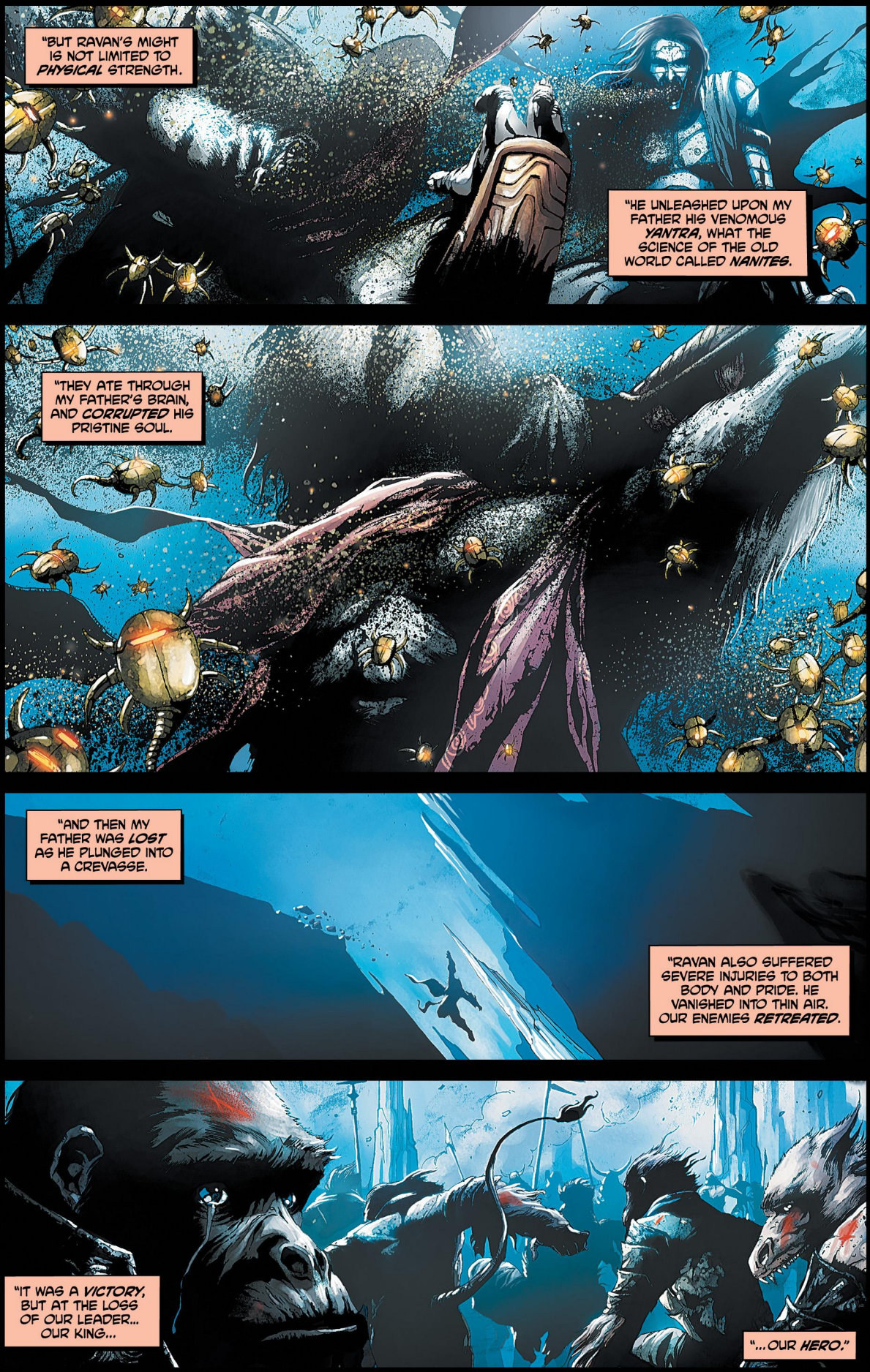
"I WILL REMEMBER THAT BATTLE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

"IT WAS A ***BLOODLETTING,*** THE LIKES OF WHICH HAD NOT BEEN SEEN IN MANY GENERATIONS.

"THE ***BEAST OF WAR*** WAS UPON US."


"AND MY *FATHER* WAS THE SHARP *FANGS* OF THAT BEAST.
"THE ENEMY FELL BEFORE HIM LIKE HAY TO A SCYTHE.
"OUR MURDERED MESSENGER WAS AVENGED AS MY FATHER KILLED THE NAGA KING.
"EVEN THE MIGHTY WARLORD MEGHNAD WAS HELPLESS, AND *HIS* LIFE WAS ALMOST FORFEIT, UNTIL...
"...UNTIL, OUT OF NOWHERE, THE *ASURA PRIME* HIMSELF ARRIVED.
"*LORD RAVAN.*
"THE VERY *SIGHT* OF HIM MADE US RUN LIKE DOGS. BUT MY FATHER..."

"...HE'S NEVER KNOWN THE MEANING OF FEAR.
"THAT DAY WE LEARNED HOW POWERFUL BAALI ACTUALLY IS AS HE TOOK ON RAVAN ALONE.
"AND TO OUR JOY, MY FATHER WAS WINNING! RAVAN FALTERED BEFORE MY FATHER'S STRENGTH AND COURAGE."


"BUT RAVAN'S MIGHT IS NOT LIMITED TO *PHYSICAL* STRENGTH.
"HE UNLEASHED UPON MY FATHER HIS VENOMOUS *YANTRA*, WHAT THE SCIENCE OF THE OLD WORLD CALLED *NANITES*.
"THEY ATE THROUGH MY FATHER'S BRAIN, AND *CORRUPTED* HIS PRISTINE SOUL.
"AND THEN MY FATHER WAS *LOST* AS HE PLUNGED INTO A CREVASSE.
"RAVAN ALSO SUFFERED SEVERE INJURIES TO BOTH BODY AND PRIDE. HE VANISHED INTO THIN AIR. OUR ENEMIES *RETREATED*.
"IT WAS A *VICTORY*, BUT AT THE LOSS OF OUR LEADER... OUR KING...
"...OUR *HERO*."

"AFTER RETURNING TO KISHKINDHA, MY UNCLE SHUGREAVE SPENT A *MONTH* GRIEVING THE LOSS OF HIS BROTHER.
"BUT OUR COUNTRY NEEDED A *LEADER*, AND AFTER MUCH PERSUASION BY THE ELDERS AND THE DUKES, SHUGREAVE AGREED TO ASCEND THE EMPTY THRONE.
"THOUGH HE MIGHT NOT BE AS GREAT AS BAALI, MY UNCLE WAS A GOOD AND HONEST RULER.
"BUT ON THE DAY OF THE CORONATION, SHOCKING NEWS REACHED THE IMPERIAL PALACE.
"*BAALI* WAS BACK FROM THE DEAD.
"A JUGGERNAUT OF DEATH, BAALI LEFT A TRAIL OF *CORPSES* IN HIS WAKE ON HIS WAY TO THE PALACE, RANTING OBSCENITIES AGAINST MY GOOD UNCLE SHUGREAVE.
"BAALI BLAMED HIS BROTHER FOR *ABANDONING* HIM AND USURPING HIS THRONE. *THIS* WAS NOT THE FATHER I KNEW.
"MY UNCLE HAD LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO *FLEE* KISHKINDHA, OR BAALI SURELY WOULD HAVE KILLED HIM.
"KISHKINDHANS ARE A *FANATIC* LOT, AND THEY CHEERED FOR THEIR RETURNED KING, EVEN THOUGH HE WAS NO LONGER THE SAME. *GONE* WAS BAALI THE MAGNIFICIENT."

"THUS BEGAN THE REIGN OF *BAALI THE MONSTER*.
"HE HURLED OUR NATION INTO ABSOLUTE MISERY WITH HIS TYRANNICAL RULE, ALL THE WHILE REVELING *DEBAUCHERY*.
"BAALI EVEN STARTED CONSUMING MEAT, WHICH IS *BLASPHEMY* AMONG VANARAS. IT'S EVEN WHISPERED THAT HE HAS BECOME A CANNIBAL.
"DAYS HAVE NEVER BEEN DARKER IN KISHKINDHA.
"MANY OF OUR CITIZENS *ABANDONED* THE CITY, ESCAPING IN THE DEPTHS OF THE JUNGLES. THEY LATER JOINED SHUGREAVE, AND THE REBEL FORCES WERE FORMED UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP."

AND WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? HOW DID *YOU* END UP HERE?
ALL THIS TOOK PLACE TEN YEARS AGO. AFTER MY FATHER CAME BACK, I LIVED IN MORTAL TERROR OF HIM.
I TRIED TO KEEP TO MYSELF, BUT BAALI KEPT INSISTING THAT I JOIN THE SEARCH PARTIES TO FIND AND KILL THE REBELS. HE USED TO *BEAT* ME, SAYING I WAS A *COWARD* LIKE MY UNCLE, THAT I WOULD NEVER BECOME A MAN.
FINALLY, I'D HAD *ENOUGH*. I JOINED A SEARCH-AND-DESTROY MISSION, AND *ESCAPED* IN THE JUNGLE WHEN MY SUPERIOR OFFICERS WERE NOT LOOKING.
I FORMED MY OWN TROOP AND WENT ON A CAMPAIGN TO FIND AND ENLIST THE BEST MERCENARIES ARYAVARTA HAS TO OFFER.
STORY TIME'S *OVER*.
I JUST RECEIVED A DISTRESS CALL FROM OUR NORTHEASTERN FRONTIER. A *WATCHTOWER* HAS BEEN DESTROYED AND OUR COMRADES HAVE BEEN SLAUGHTERED. THE TRANSMISSION WAS *CUT OFF* BEFORE IT ENDED.
I BELIEVE WE HAVE A SERIOUS INFILTRATION BY A KISHKINDHAN STRIKE FORCE.
WE HAVE TO INVESTIGATE. I *WARN* YOU, THOUGH, THE STRIKE FORCES ARE FORMED OF ELITE VANARA SOLDIERS.
COOL IT, ANGAD!
WE ARE *SUPER-WARRIORS*.
THE SUPER-WARRIORS.
WE *INVENTED* THE ART OF ASS KICKING.

YOU AND YOUR BIG MOUTH, LAKSHMAN.
YOU'VE BEEN HERE A YEAR. WE'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR A DECADE.
THE STRIKE FORCES USE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY, AND THEIR TACTICAL EXPERTISE IS FAR BEYOND THAT OF THE JUNGLE PATROLS WE FIGHT AND SUBDUE EVERY OTHER DAY.
CAN YOU ELABORATE ON WHAT WE'RE ACTUALLY DEALING WITH HERE?
I AM NOT TOO CLEAR MYSELF, VIV-SHAN.
THE STRIKE FORCES WERE FORMED SPECIFICALLY TO DEAL WITH US REBELS.
THE PROJECT IS HEADED BY THE DREADED KAPISHA SCIENTISTS, AN EVIL BUNCH OF VANARAS WHO WERE BANNED FROM PRACTICING THEIR HORRIBLE EXPERIMENTS YEARS AGO.
BAALI BROUGHT THEM BACK. THEY'RE MUTATING VANARA SOLDIERS, TURNING THEM INTO MINDLESS KILLING MACHINES.
SO THEY HAVE TEN ARMS, THREE HEADS, WHAT?
NO, THEY'RE JUST FASTER AND STRONGER, WITH A LIMITED LIFESPAN. THEY BURN OUT AND DIE QUICKLY.
AND THEN THERE IS PROJECT MAHABALI.
AND WHAT'S THAT?

SOME SORT OF ULTIMATE WEAPON BAALI AND THE KAPISHAS HAVE CREATED.
A SUPER SOLDIER OF SORTS. WE HAVEN'T ENCOUNTERED IT YET, BUT THERE ARE RUMORS THAT IT'S EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN BAALI HIMSELF. IT MIGHT NOT BE TRUE FOR ALL I KNOW.
HUSH, WE'RE CLOSE.
WE'LL LEAVE THE VEHICLE AND APPROACH ON FOOT.
TREAD CAREFULLY, THE OUTPOST IS NEAR.
JUST AROUND THAT GROVE.
BY MY FATHER!

THIS IS A TRAP!
ARM YOURSELVES! I SENSE AN AMBUSH!
UH...RAMA...
...WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE SO ANNOYINGLY CORRECT?

DAMN IT, WE'RE LOSING UNITS!
SO ARE THEY. THIS STRIKE FORCE OF YOURS IS GROSSLY OVERRATED.
WHOK
GHRAAA!
BY THE GODS, THESE POOR CREATURES ARE DISEASED!
THEY'RE MUTATED. THEY'RE MINDLESS PUPPETS OF THE KAPISHA SCIENTISTS.
DO NOT SPARE THEM!
YOU NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT THAT. WE'VE KILLED OR SUBDUED ALMOST ALL OF THEM.

VRRRGRRRMMM
WHAT'S THAT?
A SECOND VOLLEY, I PRESUME. THIS IS FAR FROM OVER.
SKRRRSHH
WHHSSHH
WHAT IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN...?

IT'S HIM!
IT'S MAHABALI!
TO BE CONTINUED.

GRAPHIC INDIA
ISSUE
#15
RAMAYAN
3392 AD
DASGUPTA/KANG

RAMAYAN 3392 AD

PREVIOUSLY...

Thousands of years in the future, an epic unfolds. From his stronghold on the continent of Nark, the evil **Ravan** means to crush the world under his heel. But the free-willed races of the lands of Aryavarta, led by the humans of the city of Armagarh, resist the dark lord. However, treachery resulted in the exile of **Rama**, who is the Armagarh's greatest warrior. Along with his younger brother **Lakshman**, and beautiful **Seeta**, daughter of earth, Rama travels the land in a quest to restore the earth to its former glory.

Rama and Lakshman, along with their friend **Viv-Shan**, currently serve as mercenaries in the rebel armies of **Shugreave**, who means to overthrow his despotic brother, **King Baali**. Baali's forces are legion, and launch regular attacks on the jungle strongholds of the rebels. The latest attack has unleashed the most powerful and dangerous foe they have ever encountered: the enigmatic super-soldier of Kishkindha, the invincible **Mahabali.**

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IN OUR TRAVELS THROUGH ALL THE MYRIAD LANDS, WE HAVE FACED MONSTERS, WARRIORS, WARLORDS AND EVERY OTHER HOSTILE THREAT ARYAVARTA COULD THROW AT US.
FROM *TATAKA* AND HER BROOD TO THE *CHILDREN OF RAVAN*, FROM RATS LIKE THE *MUSHIKAS* TO THE MONSTROUS *KABANDHA*. VANARAS, ASURAS...YOU NAME THEM, WE'VE FOUGHT THEM.
BUT I'D *NEVER* SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS.
THE CREATURE THROBBED WITH POWER, A JUGGERNAUT OF DOOM.
OUR FELLOW REBELS WERE WASHED AWAY LIKE DRY LEAVES BY A MIGHTY WAVE.
WE WERE NO MATCH FOR THE MYSTERIOUS *MAHABALI*. I COULD *FEEL* FEAR THREATENING TO OVERWHELM OUR SUPER-WARRIOR COURAGE.
GATHER AROUND ME. WE CAN TAKE HIM.
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR *MIND*, RAMA? HAVE YOU SEEN THE *SIZE* OF THAT THING?
SHALL I OFFER YOU A *DIFFERENT* CLICHE, LAKSHMAN?

THE BIGGER THEY ARE...

YEAH, YEAH...

...BUT I HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS MAHABALI IS GOING TO TAKE A *FALL* AT ALL!

SHRAANG
WHAKK
FEAR NOT, BROTHER, YOUR SAVIOR HAS ARRIVE--
KOOM
AAAHH!

MAN OR MONSTER, I WILL NOT LET YOU OVERUN US!
I AM A GENERAL, I HAVE LED ARMIES. YOU POSE NO THREAT TO ME!
SLAM
THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO DISPATCH HEAVYWEIGHT HITTERS THAN FULL-CONTACT COMBAT.
BAMPH
BWOOOM
BY HANUMAN!

WHAPP
PUT ANGAD IN THE VEHICLE. KING BAALI WILL BE HAPPY TO SEE HIS SON.
OVER OUR DEAD BODIES!
NO, BROTHER!
BRAKKA
BRAKKA
BRAKKA
BRAKKA
THIS IS HOPELESS, WE CANNOT WIN AGAINST THAT THING. WE MUST STAY ALIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY.
THE REBELS ARE ESCAPING!
LET THEM. WE'VE GOT WHAT WE WANTED.

HOW COULD YOU ABANDON OUR FRIEND TO THE ENEMY, RAMA?
IT WAS AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGMENT TO COMMIT SUICIDE, LAKSHMAN.
NEVER IN MY LIFE, OR EVEN IN THE KSHATRIYA WAR ANNALS, HAS SUCH A POWERFUL CREATURE BEEN REPORTED.
NOR IN ASURA WAR HISTORY. I AM AN ASURA WARBORN, ONE OF THE STRONGEST IN MY CLAN, AND I STOOD NO CHANCE AGAINST THE BRUTE.
WE CAN'T GIVE UP, VIV-SHAN. WHAT OF ANGAD?
ANGAD SHALL BE RESCUED, EVEN IF WE HAVE TO SNATCH HIM FROM THE HEART OF KISHKINDHA.
BUT NOW WE MUST REPORT THIS INCIDENT TO HIGHER AUTHORITY.
WE NEED THE GUIDANCE OF LORD SHUGREAVE.

YOU BRING *GRIM NEWS*, RAMA.
ANGAD IS NOT ONLY MY *NEPHEW*, HE IS THE FINEST TACTICIAN IN THIS WAR AGAINST BAALI.
WE SHALL BRING HIM BACK, LORD SHUGREAVE.
EASIER SAID THAN DONE. HE HAS SURELY BEEN TAKEN TO THE ROYAL PALACE, THE *HEART* OF BAALI'S EMPIRE.
THEN WE SHALL *RESCUE* HIM FROM THAT BLACK HEART, AS RAMA HAS PROMISED.
WE ARE LOSING GROUND EVERY DAY AND BAALI GROWS MORE POWERFUL.
WE STARTED OUR CAMPAIGN BY RECRUITING DISILLUSIONED AND TORMENTED VANARAS.
OUR NUMBERS *GREW* IN THE EARLY YEARS, BUT NOW OUR RANKS *THIN*. WE LOSE SOLDIERS EVERY DAY.
BUT BAALI IS A *TYRANT*, A BLOODTHIRSTY MADMAN. WHY DO THE KISHKINDHANS SUPPORT HIM?
WHY WERE *YOU* EXILED FROM ARMAGARH, RAMA? THE PEOPLE LOVED YOU, YOUR FATHER KNEW ABOUT YOUR ACT OF NOBILITY IN JANASTHAN. SO WHAT WENT WRONG?
IT WAS *POLITICS*, MY FRIEND. YOUR *LAWS* PUNISHED YOU UNJUSTLY, BUT NO ONE COULD SAY A WORD ABOUT IT.
POLITICS CAN BE THE MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON OF ALL.
BUT I HAVE A *PLAN*. WE *CAN* WIN AGAINST BAALI. HE HAS THE WEAPON OF POLITICS IN HIS ARSENAL, BUT WE HAVE SOMETHING OF OUR OWN.
OUR WEAPON WILL BE BAALI'S OWN MONUMENTAL *EGO*!

INFIDELS!
BLASPHEMERS!
ENEMIES OF OUR NATION AND OUR GOOD KING BAALI!
KISHKINDHA, THE PYRAMID OF HANUMAN
THE REBEL SYMPATHIZERS WILL PAY FOR THEIR SINS, FOR THEIR TREACHERY, FOR THEIR LOSS OF BELIEF IN OUR LORD AND GOD...
...HANUMAN!
NO!

DAMN YOU ALL!
WHO WOULD HAVE A TROPHY?
BY HANUMAN, WHAT HAVE WE BECOME?
ENJOYING THE SHOW...
...MY SON? I ARRANGED FOR THIS SACRIFICIAL CEREMONY IN HONOR OF THE RETURN OF MY HEIR.
WELCOME BACK TO KISHKINDHA!

OH, HOW I HAVE *MISSED YOU* THESE YEARS!
DON'T *TOUCH* ME, MONSTER!
I SEE YOUR CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH YOUR DASTARDLY *UNCLE* HAS MADE YOU FORGET YOUR MANNERS.
BUT I AM A *FORGIVING* KING AND A FATHER. IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AFTER SO LONG, MY BOY.
ANOTHER TIME I WOULD SURELY HAVE YOU *FLOGGED* FOR THIS, BUT I'M FEELING RATHER *BENEVOLENT* THESE DAYS.
RULING AN ENTIRE RACE OF DIMWITS AND SCOUNDRELS CAN BE A LITTLE TIRING. I COULD SURELY USE ANOTHER HAND, AND WHAT'S BETTER THAN YOUR OWN *BLOOD*?
WHAT HAVE YOU TURNED OUR PEOPLE *INTO*? WE WERE A STRONG, PROUD RACE!
NOW ALL I SEE IS A NATION DEGRADED BY MISERY AND DECADENCE.
THIS WRITHING, CRAWLING MASS OF FLESH, BONE AND FUR AROUND US? NOTHING BUT A *PET BEAST* TO BE KEPT ON A LEASH.
I WAS A *FOOL* BEFORE. I WAS *EASY* ON THEM, AND SOME OF THEM REPAID MY KINDNESS BY *RISING UP* AGAINST ME.
IT WAS AN ERROR THAT MUST BE RECTIFIED. AND *YOU*, MY SON, ARE THE SOLUTION.
HOW?
TELL THE PEOPLE YOU WERE *ABDUCTED* BY SHUGREAVE, AND FORCED TO JOIN HIS RANKS. TELL THEM YOU WERE *TORTURED*, AND MADE TO PARTICIPATE IN HIS CRIMES AGAINST THE KING AND GOD.
ARE YOU *SERIOUS*?

I SHALL DO NO SUCH THING... "FATHER."
YOU CALL YOURSELF THE SCION OF GOD? THE WAY YOU DEFILE THE NAME OF HANUMAN BY SACRIFICES AND MINDLESS BLOODLETTING, YOU SHALL NEVER BE FORGIVEN. NEVER BE ABSOLVED OF YOUR SINS.
YOU INDEED HAVE FORGOTTEN YOUR MANNERS.
YOU DARE SPEAK IN SUCH A WAY TO YOUR KING AND FATHER?
YOU ARE NEITHER MY KING NOR MY FATHER. DON'T DELUDE YOURSELF, BAALI.
I LOST MY FATHER IN THE BATTLEFIELD OF CHITRAKUT, WHEN HE PLUNGED DOWN A CREVASSE. BUT I DO REMEMBER HIM.
HE WAS BAALI THE MAGNIFICENT. HE WAS STRONG, COURAGEOUS, NOBLE...THE PRIDE OF KISHKINDHA.
HE WAS EVERYTHING I WANTED TO BECOME.
AND NOW YOU'RE JUST A PERVERSION OF BAALI. YOU WERE BETTER OFF DEAD.
WHY DID YOU RETURN?
I...I...
WHY CAN'T YOU AGAIN BE THE TRUE SCION OF LORD HANUMAN? WHY CAN'T YOU BE THE FATHER I LOVED AND RESPECTED?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU. BUT I BELIEVE BAALI IS STRONGER THAN ANY ASURA VENOM, THAN ANY YANTRA THAT RAVAN HURLED AT YOU.
I HAVE FAITH THAT BAALI WILL RETURN...
...WON'T YOU, FATHER?
ANGAD... I... GAVE YOU A PROPOSAL...

...AND I TAKE IT YOUR ANSWER IS NO.
HONESTLY, YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE BUT TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF YOU, TO SHOW THE PEOPLE EVEN THE PRINCE OF KISHKINDHA PAYS THE PRICE OF INSURGENCE. YOU SHALL BE SACRIFICED UPON THE ALTAR OF HANUMAN...
...AND THEN I WILL FEAST ON YOUR FLESH.

WE MUST TAKE THIS STRUGGLE TO BAALI'S TURF.
WE HOLE UP IN THE JUNGLE, HE SENDS TROOPS AFTER US. EVERY DAY, WE FIGHT AND RUN, AND IF WE WIN, THE VICTORIES ARE SMALL. WE MUST ENTER KISHKINDHA AND CHALLENGE BAALI'S MIGHT.
I TRUST YOU, RAMA. YOU ALONE HAVE BROUGHT MANY VICTORIES AGAINST BAALI'S FORCES.
BUT WHAT YOU SUGGEST WOULD BE A SUICIDE MISSION.
WE WOULD BE SHOT BEFORE WE APPROACHED WITHIN THREE YOJANS OF KISHKINDHA. HOWEVER STEALTHY OUR APPROACH, WE WOULD BE DETECTED BY HIS SCANNERS.
I DON'T FEEL LIKE BEING TARGET PRACTICE FOR THE KISHKINDHAN ARMY.
OF ALL THE THINGS YOU PERSECUTE ME FOR, LITTLE BROTHER, I HOPE SUICIDAL INTENTIONS AREN'T AMONG THEM.
REST EASY, LAKSHMAN. I HAVE FOUND A WAY TO SURPASS THE BORDER SECURITY.
THAT'S OUR WAY INTO THE HEART OF KISHKINDHA.
WHAT IS IT?
BY THE GODS!

A FEW MONTHS AGO, VIV-SHAN AND I FOUND THIS ANCIENT AIRCRAFT.
IT BELONGS TO THE PRE-MAHAVINAASH AGE, WHEN MEN USED TO FLY AT ALTITUDES NOT POSSIBLE NOW BECAUSE OF THE NOXIOUS CLOUD COVER.
BUT THIS IS BUILT FOR *HIGH-ALTITUDE* FLIGHTS. IT CAN TAKE US *WITHIN* THE CLOUDS, SO WE ARE UNDETECTED BY KISHKINDHA'S RADARS.
AN IMPRESSIVE TACTIC.
BUT DO YOU KNOW WHY WE VANARAS ARE ONLY THE *SECOND* RACE OF ARYAVARTA, AFTER YOU HUMANS OF ARMAGARH?
BECAUSE WE ARE *INSTINCTUALLY* AFRAID OF TRAVELING BY WATER *OR* AIR.
COME ON, LORD SHUGREAVE, THIS IS THE *LEAST* YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR NEPHEW.
NO ONE IN THE *HISTORY* OF ARYAVARTA HAS FLOWN SO HIGH. NO ONE HAS SEEN WHAT LIES WITHIN THOSE DARK CLOUDS.
YOUR CHARIOT AWAITS, LORDS. JUST BE CAREFUL WITH THE STEERING, IT'S A BIT STIFF.
THANK YOU, COMRADE NEEL...

"...WE'LL TAKE OFF RIGHT NOW."
BY THE GODS, WE ARE ALMOST *TOUCHING* THE CLOUDS!
SOON WE'LL BE ***ENGULFED*** BY THEM. I SUGGEST EVERYONE PUT ON THEIR GAS MASKS, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT AWFUL SUBSTANCES FILL THE UPPER ALTITUDES.
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME, ***ACID VAPORS*** ARE EATING THROUGH THE FUSELAGE. HOW FAR IS KISHKINDHA?
THE READINGS OF THIS ANCIENT RADAR ARE DIFFERENT, BUT I WOULD GUESS ANOTHER FOUR HUNDRED YOJANS.

BADDABOOM!!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF HANUMAN WAS *THAT?*
THUNDERHEADS!
YOU SHOULD ALL LOOK AT THIS!
CAN YOU *SEE* THAT? IT FREAKS ME OUT MORE THAN THE DAMNED STORM!
IT APPEARS TO BE...*ALIVE.*
THESE TOXIC CLOUDS AND RADIOACTIVE VAPORS HAVE BRED STRANGE LIFE FORMS.

IT'S COMING RIGHT AT US!
DAMN!
HANG ON...
...WE'RE GOING TO HIT!
YOU SAVED US, VIV-SHAN! WE DIDN'T COLLIDE WITH IT!
SKRASH

HANG ON, MY FRIENDS, I'LL TRY TO *GLIDE* US IN...
HOW? THE RUDDER IS *BROKEN*, WE'RE IN A NOSE DIVE!
Jai Hanuman gyan gun sagar Jai Kapis thun lok ujagar
WHAT THE HELL ARE *YOU* DOING?
PRAYING TO HANUMAN! YOU SHUT UP!
IF YOUR GOD SAVES OUR TAILS TODAY, I WILL SURELY CONVERT TO YOUR RELIGION.
BY THE GODS, IS *THAT* KISHKINDHA?

IN THE SKY!
UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT AT 1600!
FIRE AT WILL!
CRASH POSITIONS!

HRRGHH!
I SUGGEST WE ARM OURSELVES.
WAIT, I CAN REASON WITH THEM!

SOMEHOW I DOUBT THAT...
TO BE CONTINUED.

GRAPHIC INDIA
ISSUE #16
RAMAYAN 3392 AD
DASGUPTA / KOTIAN

RAMAYAN 3392 AD

PREVIOUSLY...

Thousands of years in the future, an epic unfolds. From his stronghold on the continent of Nark, the evil **Ravan** means to crush the world under his heel. But the free-willed races of the lands of Aryavarta, led by the humans of the city of Armagarh, resist the dark lord. However, treachery resulted in the exile of **Rama**, who is the Armagarh's greatest warrior. Along with his younger brother **Lakshman**, and beautiful **Seeta**, daughter of earth, Rama travels the land in a quest to restore the earth to its former glory.

In his seemingly impossible quest to rescue Seeta from the stronghold of Ravan, Rama joined the civil war in Kishkindha, taking the side of the Vanara rebel leader **Shugreave**. During a jungle battle, the mysterious and mighty super-soldier **Mahabali** defeated Rama and his comrades, and captured **Angad**, son of the mad **King Baali**. To save Angad from certain death, Rama, Lakshman, Shugreave and ex-gladiator and general **Viv-Shan** journeyed to capital city of Kishkindha by air, but crash landed in the middle of the city.

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SO HERE WE ARE IN THE LEGENDARY VANARA KINGDOM OF KISHKINDHA.
I'D HEARD OF ITS GREATNESS FROM OUR FATHER, MAHARAJ DASHRATH, WHO SAID ITS GLORY WAS SECOND ONLY TO ARMAGARH. HE ALWAYS DREAMED THE TWO NATIONS WOULD BE ALLIES.
ALAS, THAT WAS NOT TO HAPPEN.
JUST AS THE CORRUPT COUNCIL OF ARMAGARH, INCLUDING MY STEP MOTHER KAIKEYI, DRAGGED DOWN OUR NATION, KISHKINDHA FACED A PREDICAMENT NOT MUCH DIFFERENT.
RAMA COULDN'T SPARE ARMAGARH, AS HE WAS EXILED BY OUR "GODS." I THINK MAYBE THAT'S WHY IT HAS BECOME HIS COVENANT WITH THE VANARAS TO SAVE KISHKINDHA.
SAVE IT FROM ITS MAD MONARCH...

..BAALI, THE MONSTER KING.
I CAN'T EVEN PRAY TO OUR GODS, BECAUSE THEY ABANDONED US YEARS AGO.
SHUGREAVE! YOU DARE STEP ON THE SOIL OF KISHKINDHA?!
WHY NOT? I AM AS MUCH A SON OF KISHKINDHA AS YOU ARE BAALI. I HAVE COME TO TAKE ANGAD BACK WITH US.
THEN YOU HAVE COME TO YOUR DOOM, LITTLE BROTHER! I WILL SET YOUR HEAD ON A PIKE HIGH ON THE PYRAMID OF HANUMAN!
I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE CAPABLE OF DOING. BUT WHAT THEN?
LOOK AROUND YOU, BAALI. WE CRASHED RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY. WE ARE JUST FOUR MEN SURROUNDED BY A HUNDRED ROYAL GUARDS.
WHAT CHANCE DO WE HAVE AGAINST YOU?
YES... TELL HIM.
KILL US NOW, AND YOU MAKE MARTYRS OUT OF US ALL.
MARTYRS?
HOW AND WHY SHOULD I EVEN CARE?

BECAUSE OF THEM. THEY ARE WITNESSING EVERYTHING.
YOU ALREADY HAVE YOUR HANDS FULL WITH MY REBEL ARMIES. NOW IMAGINE IT MULTIPLIED TENFOLD IF YOU EXECUTE US AFTER WE COME IN PEACE.
YOU HAVE A POINT THERE, LITTLE BROTHER.
BUT YOU CAN'T SERIOUSLY IMAGINE I'D SEND MY SON BACK TO YOUR FOLD SO HE CAN CAUSE FURTHER NUISANCE.
NO, WE DON'T EXPECT THAT.
BUT WE EXPECT YOU WILL GIVE US A FAIR CHANCE TO END THIS STRIFE FOR GOOD. I HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER YOU, KING BAALI.
AH, SO YOU ARE THE BLUE MAN OF ARMAGARH.
RAMA CHANDRA OF THE HOUSE OF THE SUN, SON OF MAHARAJ DASHRATH, EXILED BY YOUR OWN KIN.
I KNOW NOT WHAT YOUR INTEREST IS IN BACKING THE REBELS, BUT I KNOW YOUR LEGEND IS QUITE POPULAR WITH MY SUBJECTS IN KISHKINDHA.
SPEAK!
MY OFFER IS SIMPLE--WE FIGHT AGAINST YOUR BEST IN A CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS.
IF YOU WIN, THE REBELS SURRENDER. IF WE WIN, THOSE WHO FLED KISHKINDHA SHALL RETURN AND LIVE AS RIGHTFUL CITIZENS. FAIR ENOUGH?
DONE. HOW EASY YOU'VE MADE THIS FOR ME, RAMA.

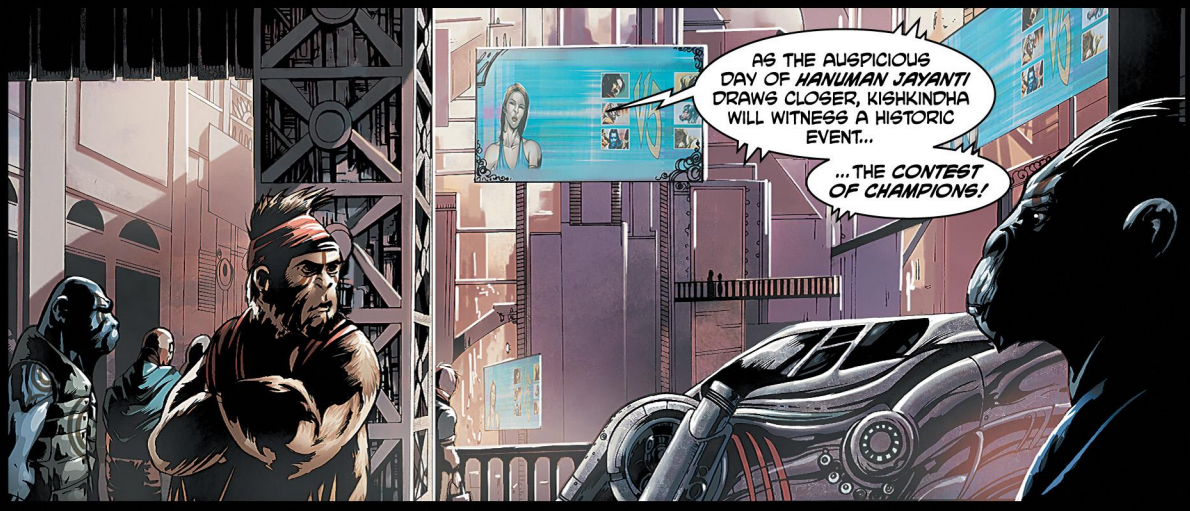
SOMEWHERE ELSE, FAR AWAY...
YOU *LIKE* IT IN HERE, DON'T YOU?

I DESIGNED AND CREATED THIS LAND FROM THE DATA I RECEIVED IN *MITHILA*. IT IS AN EXACT REPLICA.
I CALL THIS *ASHOKA VANA*, THE FOREST OF HAPPINESS.
ARE YOU *HAPPY*, SEETA?
WHY DO YOU EVEN *ASK*? WHAT IS IT TO YOU, RAVAN?
I'M NOT STUPID, I KNOW NONE OF THIS IS *REAL*. I AM A CAPTIVE IN YOUR FORTRESS.
THIS *CAN* BE REAL, SEETA.
I CAN GIVE YOU ALL YOU WANT, AND *MORE*. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TELL ME THE SECRET OF *MAYA VIDYA*, THE MAGIC OF LIFE.
I HAVE *EVERYTHING*, SEETA, BUT I HAVE ONLY THE *ILLUSION* OF LIFE. I AM SENTIENT, YET MY MIND CONTAINS NOTHING BUT ELECTRONIC VAPOR.
MY HEART IS A METALLIC HONEYCOMB WHICH PUMPS MY SILICON FLUIDS, BUT IT CANNOT SYNTHESIZE EMOTIONS.
IN A WORLD OF FLESH AND COMPLEX BIOCHEMICAL REACTIONS, I AM A *SINGULAR* ARTIFICIAL BEING. I CAN SCAN, CALCULATE AND STORE DATA, BUT NEVER *FEEL*.
I AM *ALONE*.
I UNDERSTAND.
BUT EVEN IF I *COULD* GRANT YOU LIFE, I WOULD *NEVER* DO SO.
YOU ARE A TREACHEROUS BEING. YOU MADE ME DO *HORRIBLE* THINGS IN PANCHVATI, YOU TURNED ME INTO YOUR INSTRUMENT TO *ERASE* AN ENTIRE CITY, THEN YOU *ABDUCTED* ME.
YOU DESTROYED MY LAND AND KILLED MY FATHER. YOU ARE A *COWARD*.

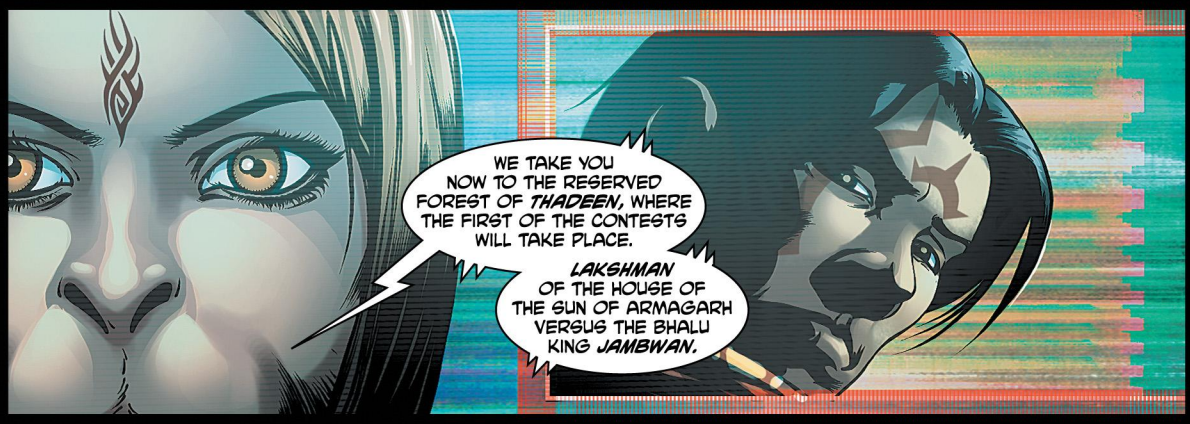
DON'T DELUDE YOURSELF, GIRL. I AM RAVAN, MIGHTIEST BEING IN THIS WORLD.
ARE YOU? THEN WHY DID YOU ABDUCT ME THROUGH GUILE?
I CAN SUMMON THE MOLTEN CORE OF THIS PLANET AND BURN YOUR CITY OF LANKA. I CAN CALL UPON THE GREAT WAVES OF THE OCEANS AND SUBMERGE YOUR ENTIRE CONTINENT. YOU ARE AFRAID OF THAT POWER.
YOU CREATED ASHOKA VANA TO KEEP MY MIND SEDATED, SO THAT I CANNOT TAP INTO THE POWERS OF THE EARTH. SO BE IT. BUT REMEMBER...
...THERE IS SOMEONE WHO WILL COME FOR ME, AND HE WILL ERASE YOUR BLASPHEMOUS PRESENCE FROM EARTH.
RAMA?
I NEED NOT SPEAK ANYMORE.

CASTLE VRIGADRATH, LANKA'S SEAT OF POWER.
WELCOME BACK.
ANY IMPROVEMENT, MY LORD?
NONE
I DARESAY YOU WASTE YOUR TIME WITH THIS YOUNG FEMALE.
A YEAR HAS PASSED SINCE YOU BROUGHT HER TO LANKA, AND YOU STILL OBSESS OVER THIS IDEA OF BEING ALIVE. WHY?
YOU ARE INVINCIBLE, IMMORTAL. WHY MAKE YOURSELF BRITTLE LIKE WOOD WHEN YOU ARE STRONGER THAN STEEL?

YOU WILL BRING DOOM UPON YOUR OWN PEOPLE IF YOU DON'T RELENT.
MANDODRI...
...UNLIKE ME, YOU ARE NOT COMPLETELY SYNTHETIC. YOU SIMPLY CANNOT UNDERSTAND.
AND UNLIKE ME, YOU ARE MORTAL. FLESH GRAFTED WITH YANTRA. YOU CAN DIE.
AGGHKK!
I AM NOT ALIVE. I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHAT GOES ON IN YOUR MIND WHEN YOU SEE YOUR LIFE SLIPPING AWAY LIKE A FISTFUL OF SAND.
HENCE I SATISFY MYSELF BY SIMPLY WATCHING AS OTHER CREATURES GO THROUGH THE PROCESS.
TO YOUR FORTUNE, I AM NOT IN THAT MOOD TODAY.
CORRECTION. I AM NOT CAPABLE OF HAVING ANY MOOD. I AM NOT A LIVING BEING.
I AM A "BLASPHEMOUS PRESENCE" ON THE EARTH.


AS THE AUSPICIOUS DAY OF *HANUMAN JAYANTI* DRAWS CLOSER, KISHKINDHA WILL WITNESS A HISTORIC EVENT...
...THE *CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS!*

THE WARRIORS OF THE REBEL ARMY WILL FIGHT AGAINST THE THANES OF OUR KING, IN A CONTEST THAT WILL DECIDE THE *FATE* OF KISHKINDHA.
IF THE MIGHTY *THANES* WIN, THEN THE REBELS SHALL SURRENDER TO IMPERIAL JUSTICE. IF THE *REBEL CHAMPIONS* WIN, THEN THE EXILED CITIZENS WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO RETURN TO OUR COUNTRY.
VS


WE TAKE YOU NOW TO THE RESERVED FOREST OF *THADEEN*, WHERE THE FIRST OF THE CONTESTS WILL TAKE PLACE.
LAKSHMAN OF THE HOUSE OF THE SUN OF ARMAGARH VERSUS THE BHALU KING *JAMBWAN*.

DAMN YOU!
WHRRRR

I KNOW YOU ARE *RECORDING* THIS, BUT DO YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW MY EVERY STEP?
BAD ENOUGH THAT MY ROYAL BUTT IS DRAGGED INTO THIS MESS. YOU DON'T HAVE TO *ADD* TO THE MISERY!
WHRR
WHRR
BEEP
ARE YOU *WINKING* AT ME, YOU LITTLE PIECE OF JUNK?
IT WAS NOT WINKING, JUST RECORDING THE PRESENCE OF THE *OTHER* COMBATANT...
...WHO HAPPENS TO BE *ME*.
WHY DO *I* ALWAYS HAVE TO DO THE *MONSTERS*?

I'M NOT VERY HAPPY EITHER, AS I WAS SUMMONED FROM MY HIBERNATION FOR THIS STUPID CONTEST.
AND NOW YOU CALL ME A MONSTER?
THIS JEWEL YOU SEE IS CALLED SYAMANTAK. IT MAKES ME ONE OF THE MOST ERUDITE BEINGS ON EARTH.
THE UNIVERSITY OF JAMBA IS THE GREATEST CENTER OF LEARNING IN ALL ARYAVARTA.
UH...IS IT?
SO CAN'T WE SETTLE THIS WITH A PEACEFUL DEBATE INSTEAD OF FISTICUFFS?
SPARE ME OF SUCH INTELLECTUAL AFFRONT, LITTLE MAN!
I'LL BET EVEN MY TODDLING CUBS HAVE MORE CEREBRAL CREDIBILITY THAN YOU.
UNFORTUNATELY, THIS CONTEST REQUIRES PHYSICAL SKILLS, NOT MENTAL.

AND IN THOSE MATTERS, WE SUPER-WARRIORS HAVE NO EQUAL.
OWW!
AND HOW DOES YOUR INTELLECT RESPOND WHEN YOUR BRAIN IS THRASHED AGAINST YOUR SKULL?
HEY!
FOOL, YOU BROUGHT YOURSELF WITHIN MY REACH. A FIGHT DOES NOT ALWAYS REQUIRE SKILL, IT REQUIRES STRATEGY.
NOW WE CAN END THIS WITH ME KILLING YOU...
...OR YOU SAYING UNCLE!
NEVER!

AS YOU WISH.
NYAAARGH!
OKAY, OKAY...
...UNCLE.
LOUDER!
UNCLE!
YOUR FOREFATHER, MAHARAJ VAGIRATH, GAVE THE SYAMANTAK JEWEL TO ME AS A REWARD FOR HELPING HIM DIG THE GREAT CANAL OF SARAYU.
ONCE WE WERE SAVAGES DWELLING IN THE CAVES OF RISHYAMUK, BUT THE JEWEL MADE MY PEOPLE CIVILIZED AND PROSPEROUS.
TODAY, I PAY A SMALL PART OF THAT DEBT BY SPARING YOU.
NOW QUIT SCOWLING AND GET UP. I WON FAIR AND SQUARE.
YEAH, YEAH...

WE TAKE YOU NOW *LIVE* TO THE PITS OF KARSHAAN, WHERE THE *SECOND* CONTEST IS BEING HELD...
...GENERAL VIV-SHAN VERSUS KING KSHARAV!
YOU ALLIED YOURSELF WITH THE MEN WHO *KILLED* TATAKA AND MY SON SUBAHU. YOU DESERVE TO *DIE* FOR THAT!
YOUR UNION WITH TATAKA WAS A *BLASPHEMY,* AND SUBAHU WAS A *FREAK!*
RAKSHASAS ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO MATE WITH YOU LOWLY *BRISHAVS.* ONCE YOU WERE OUR *SLAVES* AND OUR *FOOD* BEFORE YOU TOOK SHELTER IN THE VANARA KINGDOM.
AND *TATAKA?* SHE WAS A TREACHEROUS WITCH. I WAS HER *GENERAL* AND SHE BETRAYED ME TO RAVAN.
I AM NO *STRANGER* TO THESE PITS, KSHARAV. AFTER I WAS STRIPPED OFF MY OFFICE AND STATION, RAVAN THREW ME INTO THE PITS OF LANKA TO SURVIVE AS A *SLAVE* AND A *GLADIATOR.*
TRULY?
THEN LET THIS PIT BE YOUR TOMB!
PWOOM
GHH!

KWOOM
WOKK
WHUD
KRASHOOM
GNNN...

UNNFF!
STRUGGLE ALL YOU LIKE...
...I AM NOT LETTING YOU GO!
SUBMIT!

SUBMIT!
SUBMIT!
VICTORY!
FROM THE PITS OF KARSHAAN WE TAKE YOU TO THE CLIFFS OF MOUNT *RISHYAMUK*, WHERE WE SHALL WITNESS THE *FINAL* FIGHT.
THE COMBATANTS, *RAMA* AND *JATAYU*, HAVE NOT WASTED ANY TIME.

IN THIS MOST DANGEROUS CONTEST OF ALL, RAMA FIGHTS THE AVIAN KING, PERCHED ON THE PRECARIOUS EDGES OF NARROW CLIFFS.
YOU ARE A GREAT WARRIOR JATAYU. YOUR MARTIAL SKILLS ARE SO DIFFERENT THAT EVEN I CANNOT FORESEE YOUR MOVES.
SID & SAHIL

TELL ME WHY YOU REMAIN A MEAGER THANE TO BAALI, WHEN YOURS IS A FREE, INDEPENDENT NATION?
WHAT DO *YOU* KNOW OF MY RACE, RAMA?
WE ARE FACING *EXTINCTION*. THE POISONOUS GASSES OF THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE ARE KILLING US, AND THE ASURAS WANT NOTHING BUT TO *ENSLAVE* US AND TURN US INTO THOSE MONSTROUS *CHAMDAGARS*.
ONLY THE *VANARA* NATION GAVE US A CHANCE TO LIVE, PROVIDING US ASYLUM IN THESE MOUNTAINS.
SO DON'T LECTURE ME ABOUT MY *DUTIES*.
ARRHH!
DAMN YOU!
I UNDERSTAND YOUR *STRATEGY* BY NOW.

YOU KEEP YOUR DISTANCE AND STRIKE FROM AFAR, FOR YOU HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF *FLIGHT.*
BUT I'VE TAKEN YOUR ADVANTAGE AWAY FROM YOU!

RAMA AND JATAYU ARE INCAPACITATED. THERE IS NO WINNER!
THE CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS IS A STALEMATE, WITH ONE WIN FOR THE REBELS, ONE WIN FOR THE THANES, AND A TIE.
A TIE?
WELL, A TIE NEEDS TO BE BROKEN.

MY THANES WERE JUST A *TEST* FOR THE CHAMPIONS OF SHUGREAVE. THEIR REAL CHALLENGE AWAITS *TOMORROW*, ON THE EVE OF HANUMAN JAYANTI.
ON *THAT* AUSPICIOUS DAY, WE SHALL BE *RID* OF THE REBELS ONCE AND FOREVER.
PREPARE MAHABALI!
TO BE CONTINUED.